

FWP ANS Program Information

What is the department's role in preventing ANS spread

FWP developed and implements the Statewide ANS Management Plan, FWP has been the lead agency for the plan since its inception. The plan was approved by the Governor and the National ANS Task Force in 2002. FWP hired a full time ANS Coordinator in 2004 to implement the plan. FWP is the Montana representative on regional and national ANS committees. The main objectives of the plan are Regional and Statewide Coordination; Education; Control and Prevention of spread; Early Detection and Monitoring; and Rapid Response. The primary focus of the plan and the department is towards prevention of introduction and spread of ANS. Once established ANS are close to impossible to eradicate and very costly to control.

FWP receives approximately \$30,000 annually from the USFWS for early detection monitoring and prevention efforts for ANS. FWP has allocated additional license and federal funding to support this program. FWP uses these funds to conduct boat inspections, angler outreach programs, and early detection monitoring at high priority waters throughout Montana. During the last boating season, FWP conducted over 3,000 watercraft inspections and monitoring at 600 sites statewide.

Last year we received an additional \$60,000 to fund a quagga/zebra mussel veliger lab to analyze water samples from Montana and surrounding states. This lab processes about 1,000 plankton samples annually and is an invaluable resource to all the states within the Missouri Basin.

For FY2010 & 2011, FWP contracted with MDA for \$192,000 for additional public outreach and education, and additional boat and water monitoring. FWP initiated an aggressive public information campaign that included print, visual and sound media. Radio and television spots were run statewide as were paid info messages in all of the state's major newspapers. News releases were distributed statewide throughout the summer to 225 media outlets and were included on FWP's website. Printed materials were distributed to all FWP license providers.

Postcards with an AIS reminder message were sent to all of Montana's registered boat owners, and angling log program participants. Signs were installed at all FWP fishing access sites and boat ramps as well as all Federally operated boat ramps statewide.

Billboards were purchased at strategic locations throughout Montana and tailgate wraps were installed on FWP vehicles. Bumper stickers were distributed at meetings and in conjunction with presentations throughout Montana.

What is the department's role in responding to ANS infestation:

FWP has the lead role in Montana for addressing ANS infestations. We coordinate with the Columbia River Basin Interagency ANS workgroup and are signed participants to the ANS Columbia Basin Response Plan. We coordinate with national labs to verify the infestation and we implement the plans to eradicate or control the infestation.

FWP has coordinated with MDA for monitoring invasive plant species on water bodies routinely monitored by FWP. FWP coordinates with MDA and other agencies when necessary on aquatic noxious weed infestations.

What is the department's role in public education:

FWP assumed the lead for developing a public outreach/education plan and for implementing the plan with funding from MDA. FWP has prepared and distributed a teacher's guide with lesson plans and resource materials was created and made available to all Montana schools. FWP entered into a contract with the Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species to assist with peer to peer outreach and school ANS educational programs.

Define what types of coordination have been accomplished with other government or non government organizations:

Beginning in FY04, FWP has coordinated with a variety of agencies to plan and implement an ANS program for Montana. Agencies and non-government organizations involved in discussions and signing-off on the Montana ANS Management Plan includes: AFS, BASS, BOR, Blackfeet Tribe, CSKT, BPA, DEQ, FFF, FWP, MDA, MDT, MHP, MSU, MWCA, NPS, Plum Creek, PPL, USFS, USFWS¹.

Montana actively coordinates with the Western Regional Panel on ANS (WRP; 19 Western States), the Mississippi River Basin Panel on ANS (MRBP; 27 States), the 100th Meridian basin workgroups including the Missouri and Columbia River Basin workgroups. FWP also actively participates in local groups including the Flathead Basin, Bitterroot River, Bighole River, and Greater Yellowstone ANS workgroups. FWP currently has representation on the National ANS Task Force, as the FWP ANS Coordinator currently co-chairs the MRBP, and is current past-chair of the WRP. FWP has hosted several regional coordinating meetings including the MRBP, ANS Task Force, and Missouri River Basin workgroup.

In FY11, FWP and MDA signed a cooperative agreement that clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of each agency and how the two agencies will work together to be more effective and efficient with limited resources.

¹ Agency/organization abbreviations; American Fisheries Society (AFS); Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS); Bureau of Reclamation (BOR); Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribe (CSKT); Bonneville Power Administration (BPA); Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF); Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP); Montana Department of Administration (MDA); Montana Department of Transportation (MDT); Montana Highway Patrol (MHP); Montana State University (MSU); Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA); National Park Service (NPS); US Forest Service (USFS); US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).